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ADDRESS.

The formation of the human character is a subject deserving the attention of the philosopher and the philanthropist. We have seen human nature in its degraded and in its most exalted forms. We have seen man mean, contracted and groveling; and we have seen him noble, magnanimous, and godlike. To what causes is this dissimilarity to be ascribed? Not so much to any difference of original constitution, as to the various circumstances in which he is placed, and the surrounding objects which constantly attract and influence his mind. Liable to be affected by all he sees and hears, his character is moulded and formed by the various objects of his senses; by the companions with whom he associates, by the authors whom he reads, by his daily employment, by the laws and customs of his country, by the religious rites on which he attends, and by his very amusements and recreations. Well, therefore, has the poet said,

The education forms the human mind,
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.

The natural tendency of trees is to grow erect; and the philosopher, who should advance the theory, that the laws of nature were inverted, that every tree had an innate propensity to grow downwards, or shoot obliquely towards the sky, or take each a crooked and serpentine course, that without the special interposition of earthquakes and hurricanes, not one vegetable would ever raise its head towards its great Creator, might be accounted not less wise and learned, than some who have drawn a similar picture of human nature. That every spirit

REV. SIR,
We are directed by the Citizens present, to tender you their thanks for your public Address on this Anniversary, and request of you a copy for publication.

We are very respectfully, your obedient Servants,
ELBRIDGE CUTLER, Chairman,
WARREN P. WINS, {
GABRIEL RUEBELLS, { Committee.

Greenwich Village, Aug. 23, 1830.

GENTLEMEN,
In reply to your polite request for a copy of my Address, this day delivered, at the Libbyon Room, for publication, I have only to say, that the Address was written at the request of the Fraternity whom you represent, and if the publication of it will afford any additional gratification, it is entirely at your disposal.

I am Gentlemen yours, FLETSUS FORTER.

ELBRIDGE CUTLER,
WARREN P. WINS, {
GABRIEL RUEBELLS, { Committee.

Greenwich Village, Aug. 23, 1830.

of grass, every stalk of corn, and every tree of the forest is not regular and erect, is not owing to any innate, inherent propensity in the vegetables themselves; but to accidental causes and circumstances, which sway them from their original destination. What those causes and circumstances are, we may not always be able to determine. The rude touch of some poisonous insect or repulse may have destroyed the tender bud; or the foot of some stray beast may have bent beyond the power of recovery, the pliable twig; or some falling tree may have pressed its weight for years upon the green sapling. These, and a thousand other causes to us unseen, may produce irregularity and deformity in the vegetable kingdom, where the original tendency was to rectitude and perfection.

Nor are the causes which operate upon the human character, less numerous, less subtle, or less efficacious. The youthful mind is of all things the most tender, delicate and susceptible. Like the sensitive plant, it feels the gentlest touch. Like the tender twig, it is easily bent in any direction. Like the softest ware, it receives the slightest impression. Like the purest white, it is stained and polluted by coming in contact with any unclean thing. And can it be supposed that a child inexperienced, un instructed, exposed to the fascinations of vice, and surrounded by evil example, can make its way through the world, uncontaminated? As well might you expect that the tenderest plant would come to maturity and perfection, when exposed to draughts and floods, winds and hail, insects and beasts.—This liability of the human mind to be affected by external causes, though greatest in early life, is not wholly lost in manhood. The sturdy oak will bend to the attack of the warping elements, and fall by the repeated strokes of the axe, which would once have severed it from the earth at a single blow. So the man of long established virtue, will sometimes fall a prey to strong temptations, in his full strength.

Were I competent to the task, time would not permit me to delineate all the causes which have an influence in forming the character, and in making the man what he is. This is a

theme upon which I might dilate from the time the sun bursts from the chambers of the east, till it went down upon the dial of Ahas, and the one half would not be told. The few remarks which I have to submit to you on this occasion, must be confined to the influence of amusements and recreation. That occasional suspension of labour, and social recreation and enjoyment are both innocent and useful, cannot be controverted. They are what God allows and man requires. The bow which is always bent, looses its spring and elasticity. The youth who never indulges himself in sports and pastimes, may be a hard thinker, but a dull scholar. The imagination must, at times, be permitted to indulge its flights; the sparks of genius, like those of the flint, must be elicited; and the whole soul expand to its full extent. But these seasons, which tend to give life, and strength, and joy to man, are seasons of danger. When the harp is lightest strung and sending forth its fullest and sweetest notes, the cord is broken. And thus in our most gay and joyous hours, elated with the smiles of convivial friends, the sparkling goblet, the flash of wit, "the fear of reason, and the flow of soul," we too often transcend the boundaries of propriety and decorum, tarnish a fair reputation, and bring upon ourselves deep sorrow and remorse. Our amusements and recreations, like all our other enjoyments, are liable to abuse. This is a good reason for caution, but not for abstinence. While restricted by the laws of sobriety and moderation, they are innocent in themselves, and conducive to our happiness and the improvement of the best and noblest faculties of our nature. They have a powerful influence in softening the temper and the manners of men, in enlarging their views and feelings, in extending and cementing their friendships, and in improving their social and moral powers. It is a more free and friendly intercourse which distinguishes a refined and polite, from a rude and barbarous people. Nothing can more readily facilitate this intercourse and its salutary effects, than occasional feasts and holidays, which call together people of different places and occupations to exchange greetings and congratulations, and to participate in the social pleasures, amusements and festivities of the day.

Among other objects to be effected by the numerous feasts appointed by God himself to be observed by the Jewish nation, was a more intimate acquaintance, and a stronger friendship among the several tribes and families. For this reason, and not as if the divine presence was confined to Jerusalem, the chosen tribes were required to assemble thrice a year in the holy city, that they might enjoy a respite from their toils, and feast upon the divine bounty, that they might remember they all had one Father, and were all brethren, and that coming thus often from every town and feasting and rejoicing together, all territorial distinctions and family jealousies might be swallowed up in national love and patriotism. So long as they held their festivals in one place, they remained one people. But when another temple was erected in Samaria, and the nation divided, the most deadly animosities ensued. The people of the two territories had no dealings with each other.

The Christian Sabbath, as well as the Jewish festivals, has a most friendly influence upon the social character of man. It is by assembling together at the same place, every week, as well as by hearing the lessons of brotherly love, that the members of the same parish contract a mutual affection. Without these weekly assemblies, inhabitants of the different parts of our towns would soon regard each other as strangers, if not as enemies. In one respect it must be confessed, that this institution is less extensive in its operations, than those festivals of the Jews, which called together the whole nation. But this, in a territory as extensive as ours, would be impracticable. And if there be a tendency in the form of our religious institutions to establish numerous separate and distinct communities who may look with jealousy upon each other, it is effectually counteracted by the spirit and genius of that religion, which inculcates universal charity and good will.

We have also other festivals and institutions which occasionally call together numbers of different religious societies and bring them to a mutual acquaintance and friendship. The commemoration of our independence inspires one common feeling of gratitude and joy throughout the nation. Though

convened in distant places, we remember, that we are one people; and that as we once suffered, so we now rejoice together.—The Masonic institution is likewise adapted to extend the acquaintance and cement the friendship of the inhabitants of different towns and parishes, and promote unity, concord and love. Here good men from all parts meet upon the level, in delicate benevolence, and practice charity. No political discord, no religious animosities, no local jealousies obtrude themselves into that sacred Temple, where brothers love to meet.

The Ichthyon Feast, which we this day celebrate, has an influence upon the social character of man, similar to the institutions and festivals already enumerated. It is a recreation innocent, amusing and instructive. The Romans assembled to contend with wild beasts and see them lacerate and destroy each other. The European princes esteem it the best of sports to give chase to the timid hare, and to assail the fierce bear. We leave to them amusements so strongly indicative of a savage temper and uncultivated taste, and choose our pleasures in what constituted the employment of some of the first disciples of the great teacher of Nazareth. After having borne the burden and heat of summer, and gathered in the former harvest, that we may meet our distant friends and pass the social hour, as well as feast together upon that divine goodness which pervades both the water and the land, we say with Simon Peter, "Let us go a fishing." We cast our hooks and nets into the water and draw from thence a luxurious meal—such as the disciples were wont to eat—and such as their divine Master often blest. Ah, delicious food! Ah, joyous day! Ah, happy friends! assembled to bless and be blessed, to give and receive the hand of friendship, to enkindle the generous affections of the soul, to inhale and inspire the pure spirit of paternal love, gratitude and devotion.

There is something in this feast so analogous to the simplicity of Gospel times, so in unison with the practice of those good men whom our Lord selected for his friends and followers, that we almost feel ourselves translated to the sea of Galilee and the lake of Genesareth, where the disciples caught

fear? and who conceived and brought it forth? From the banks of the rolling stream a voice was heard saying, "Come down from the hills and fish with us. The Ichthyon Fear is now at hand, come down, our brethren, and we will feast on fish." It was the voice of generous souls—it was the effusion of warm and affectionate hearts. The gentle zephyrs caught the sound and carried it to the distant hills and mountains. Congenial spirits from the surrounding hills listened with delight, and sent back the loud response, "We come—we come, our worthy brothers, to keep the feast with you." It is a joyous meeting; fitted to improve your social powers, and strengthen your mutual esteem and good will. At home you were citizens of the same Republic. Here you are members of the same family. And I would say to you in the language of the venerable patriarch, "Let there be no strife between you, for ye are brethren." And would it not be most inhuman and wicked to attempt to set you at variance—to teach and require you to reproach and cast off your brethren with whom you are connected by many tender ties?

I wish to excite no resentment towards any individual or body of men, nor to blend any unpleasing associations with the festivities of the day. But standing on this ground, and witnessing a numerous collection from the north and from the south, composed of good men and true, I must be permitted to express my deep regret, that a body of men, whose special duty it is to teach and to exemplify the virtues of brotherly love and charity, should ever be so blinded by bigotry, so swayed by party zeal, and so far depart from the duties of their high calling, as to draw a line of separation over the very spot where we now stand. I allude to the attempt of a clerical body, whom I need not name, to make the 6th Mass. Turpinke a grand line of separation; across which there was to be no interchange of christian love and fellowship, and by fair implication, we could not have been permitted to feast together, as we do to day, in friendship and brotherly love. The jealousy

Brookfield Association.

their fish, where the Saviour pronounced his benediction, and where the multitude, seated on the grass, ate and were filled. This was indeed a heaven begun below. This was the commencement of the gospel kingdom. This little band of laborers, were the chosen instruments to effect a great moral revolution over the whole earth—to establish the religion of their meek and unostentatious Master, upon the ruins of Jewish superstition and pagan idolatry. They were soon to go forth and proselyte the nations; and thrones, dominions, principalities and powers were to fall before them. They were now receiving their education, which was to fit them for this great work. They were called from their boats and nets to follow their Master; but they were permitted, as occasion required, to return to them again accompanied by him. He taught them from the ship, as well as from the mountain; on the coast as well as in the synagogue. It was in this easy and familiar intercourse—sometimes seated on the ground, sometimes leaning on his bosom, that they received the kingdom of God as little children. Their minds were gently and imperceptibly imbued with the spirit of their Master, and by degrees formed to his image and likeness. His meekness, his gentleness, his love, his devotion, his benevolence pervaded their whole heart and took possession of their inmost soul. From the time they were first called from their nets, till they were commissioned to teach the nations, we find no season of awakening or conviction, no hours of gloom and despondency, or of wild and extravagant character was formed not by miracle, but by those causes which invariably influence and affect the mind—by the living example, the intimate friendship, and the endearing conversation of their heaven-taught Instructor. While we indulge ourselves in that amusement which they have sanctioned by their example, let us deeply imbibes their spirit—their pure and unaffected piety—their zeal and devotion to their Master—their temperance and frugality—their benevolence and charity, which would not suffer the multitude to go away hungry, while there was a loaf or a fish in store.

Will it be asked in future time, what was the origin of this

which prompted such a measure was cruel as the grave. And while we pity those whose soul is oppressed with dark suspicions and dismal forebodings, who tremble for the ark of God, but suffer few to support it, we bless a wise and guardian providence which, by a slight change, can bring such counsel to nought, or turn it to foolishness. While the wisdom of man was employed to put asunder what God had joined together, and to render you hateful and hating one another, the festival, which we now celebrate, sprung up by common consent; that formidable barrier, the Turnpike was overleaped and trodden down, and you found by happy experience, "how good, and how pleasant it was for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Worthy and good men have one and the same spirit; and no sooner do they form an acquaintance than they feel a friendship and esteem. It is then too late for ungenerous impressions to have their pernicious effects. Their worth is already known—their merits have been accurately weighed in a just balance, and a fair word of them made upon the tablets of the heart. All jealousy and suspicion are banished from the soul, and the heart is open and the hand extended to receive a friend, companion and brother. It is in this light that I wish to present to you the favourable influence of this feast upon the human character. By calling together a large collection from different towns to keep this holiday, to participate in the pleasures of good living and enlivening conversation, you imperceptibly lose your little prejudices and local jealousies and mix and amalgamate into one people. Your views are ennobled and enlarged, your hearts warmed with a pure and holy fire, and your best feelings and affections tell you, "It is good to be here."

May each of us greet this day, in its true spirit, uniting our hands in friendship, and our hearts in love. If any one indulge malice in his heart, or bear hatred to his brother, he is not of us. Hannibal swore hatred to the Romans, and the Romans vowed the destruction of Carthage; but we bind ourselves to mutual love and benevolence. Yes, we solemnly dedicate this feast to friendship and brotherly love. We pledge

expecting that the day shall never be profaned by angry disputes, serious back-biting or malicious calumny. We set it apart for the cultivation of the social virtues. It is a day of feasting and good fellowship, which we hope long to enjoy, and which we wish our children to commemorate after us. Behold, the table is now spread; the feast is made ready; and the guests are assembled. Arise! "eat O friends! drink O beloved!"

"For God is paid, when man recovers,
To enjoy is to obey."

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